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THE CONDUCT OF OUR PROCEEDINGS.

By the Secretary.

This is the fifteenth annual volume published by our Society, and the first published in four parts and containing abstracts, which marks the completion of a change proposed three years ago. Perhaps it is a good time to look over our work and see what we have done and what we ought to do. There are a few people who say there is no such science as microscopy. Such people mistake the controlling forces of language. Common or general usage makes the words of a language and gives them their meaning, and the word microscopy has been established in such usage since the microscope was known. The development of the human intellect and change of environment modify, alter, and sometimes reverse the meaning words at first possess. Microscopy is in use by the mass of English-speaking people to signify the knowledge of how to use the microscope, and also the knowledge acquired only by means of that instrument. The word is not less useful because the science has become so rich as to be divided into separate branches, such as bacteriology, embryology, histology, etc. The relations which microscopy bears to other branches of science may be very well shown by the following table, which exhibits the natural grouping of the various parts of human knowledge. Standing as it does at the end of the series, it relates collaterally to chemistry only, especially in the branches of optics and crystallization. It is a science because it furnishes both precise and complete knowledge of the subjects to which it relates. No manipulation is more delicate and no knowledge more complete than what we obtain by the microscope. Neither is the term less useful and necessary because much of its subject-matter may also be arranged under botany and zoölogy. The science of geology stands in precisely similar relations.

Now, the American Microscopical Society, to be worthy of the name, should not only represent the whole country in membership,

LANGUAGE.	MATHEMATICS.		CHEMISTRY.		BIOLOGY.	
Ancient.	PURE.	APPLIED.	MOLECULAR.	ATOMIC.	MICROSCOPY.	
Modern.	Arithmetic,	Mechanics,	Gravitation,		BOTANY.	ZOÖLOGY.
Elocution,	Algebra,	Surveying,	Heat,	Descriptive,	Including Anatomy and Physiology of plants and animals.	
Grammar,	Geometry,	Topography,	Light,	Theoretical,	Fungi,	Protozoa,
Philology,	Trigonometry,		Electricity,		Algæ,	Metazoa,
Rhetoric,	Calculus.	Astronomy.	Magnetism.		Lichens,	Insects,
Logic,				Mineralogy,	Mosses,	Reptiles,
Music,					Ferns,	Fishes,
Drawing,					Phenogams,	Birds,
Painting,				Geology.		Mammals,
Sculpture.						History,
						Psychology,
						Sociology.

as it does, but also in our publication furnish a complete view of the progress in this branch of knowledge in this country, our particular field. Up to the end of 1892 we have published 3,000 pages, of which 600 have been the minutes of our meetings, indexes, lists of members, etc., and 2,400 pages of original papers, of which 400 have been the annual addresses of our presidents. No doubt this literature is of good quality, but whoever is anxious for the greatest success of the Society must naturally inquire if it is the best that the Society can do for its members, most of whom receive no other benefit from the Society except its publications, and many of whom have joined the society from a real enthusiasm for the science of microscopy. Also workers in foreign countries will naturally turn to our publications as representing the highest development of microscopy among us. Now, it must be admitted that there are many of the best workers in microscopical science in this country whom we have not yet brought to our support partly because of the tendency to specialization, which is a distinguishing feature of modern activity, and partly because of an impression that prevails to some extent that the Society is chiefly composed of those who "are only playing with the microscope." However incorrect and unjust the idea may be, it has existed in some cases and prevented the adhesion of the men best adapted to maintain the credit of the Society. Again, we must consider that in any successful scientific society, in this country particularly, a large number of its members are those who, while deeply interested in science, are not either professionally engaged in it nor wedded to one narrow branch. They not only want to know what the best workers are saying and doing, but they want sufficient variety of matter to cover a field a little larger than that of the pure specialist, yet defined by lines that are easily traced, and here the proper application of the word microscopist may readily be found, in that, while deeply interested in bacteriology or embryology, they do not want to be exclusively confined to them. They want also to know what is being done in the allied lines of work.

In order to obtain this general view, what is the field which must be covered by our publication? There are in the United States about 500 colleges, universities, and institutions of similar grade. It is true but a small part of these institutions publish anything, but there are so many of them that do that the number of such publications containing microscopical matter is very considerable.* Then we have some microscopical societies, like those of San Francisco and New York, that are issuing papers. Add to these the publications of the special scientific societies, such as biological and botanical, the Government publications, both National and State, and last, but not least, the numerous medical papers of varying grades, and it will easily be seen by any one familiar with the subject that there is at the present time, in this country alone, so much microscopical literature that we are confident its real extent is hardly known even by those who are brought in contact with portions of it by the nature of their pursuits. No previous attempt has ever been made to give a complete survey of this literature from a microscopical standpoint, and what is attempted in this volume must be regarded merely as specimen work, showing what may be done, rather than as exhaustive and complete. During the discussion on the subject at Madison, last summer, it was suggested that, if it should prove too costly to publish full abstracts, lists of the articles might be given. Some specimen pages of this kind are added with the idea that by publishing them in duplicate, on one side only of the paper, members can cut out and arrange them to suit themselves, since every thorough worker finds such an index necessary. This plan has been found very satisfactory by the Society of Engineering, which has for some time issued such a bibliography. Some definite time must be fixed at which our work should begin, and if it meets with encouragement it may go back to the beginning of the decade, 1890. Certain portions can be found already prepared, as it were, ready at hand, in the thorough bibliography of the *Index medicus* and some of the professional journals, which, though covering a very different field, find it necessary to include certain parts of microscopical literature.

If the Society shall approve of carrying on the plan which has been tentatively adopted this year, it will undoubtedly be necessary, in order to do the work in such a way that it can be relied on as complete, that in some.way our income be increased. This result may happen in several ways. If our journal is improved it will attract more members as a quarterly; it may expect some advertising as soon as the condition of business in the country will justify it; the annual fees could be increased, or, finally, if the character of the Society should fix the attention of some of our wealthy citizens who are willing to use their money for public utility, the Society may become endowed. In this country, endowments so far have been made chiefly to educational institutions, but it may well be asserted that at the present time we are quite as much in need of machinery by which the advanced workers can be aided in their work in science as of means for its diffusion, and it is equally certain that scientific societies such as ours are one of the most efficient agencies whereby the progress of science is promoted by encouraging original work.

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* The latest entry we note is "Tufts' College Studies," No. 1, March, 1894, containing three papers, all reprints, the first on the anterior cranial nerves of *Pipa*. G. A. Arnold. Bulletin Essex Institute.

The income of the Society for the past ten years, according to the treasurer's reports, from 1882 to 1893, inclusive, not counting 1888 or 1889, has been $5,750, or $575 a year on the average. During the past five years there has been a small surplus each year, but this has been gained only by the most careful management in the publication and at the cost of delay in the preparation of the parts, often because the necessary clerical work could not be done by the secretary without neglecting his business, which he does not consider justifiable. An increase of $300 to $500 a year in our income would be sufficient to make a thoroughly satisfactory journal.

If it were certain that the Proceedings would continue to be published in the manner indicated, our membership would increase from two directions—first, those who are beginning the use of the instrument would come to us because of the variety and utility to them of our matter, which has not heretofore been so well adapted for this class; and, secondly, the professional workers, as soon as they found our publication could be relied upon, would. come to us because they cannot anywhere else get the information we will offer them so easily and which they must have. The plan is not anything new; it is simply applying to the microscopical science of this country the same methods which have been applied in other sciences, chiefly in Europe, but which no scientific society on this side of the water has yet carried out, and which we believe will never be carried out here except by such a Society as ours. If we have overestimated either the utility or the possibility of the undertaking, our earnest efforts will be one of the examples to warn our successors of dangers to shun; but we hope for triumphant ultimate success.

WM. H. SEAMAN,
Secretary.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *August*, 1894.